

R U L E S

F O R

Bad Horfemen.

B R U L E S 6

F O R

Bad Horfemen,

O R

T H O S E

WHO DEPEND UPON

Practice without Principles.

ADDRESSED TO THE
SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT
OF ARTS, &c.

Nescit equo rudis
Harere Hor.

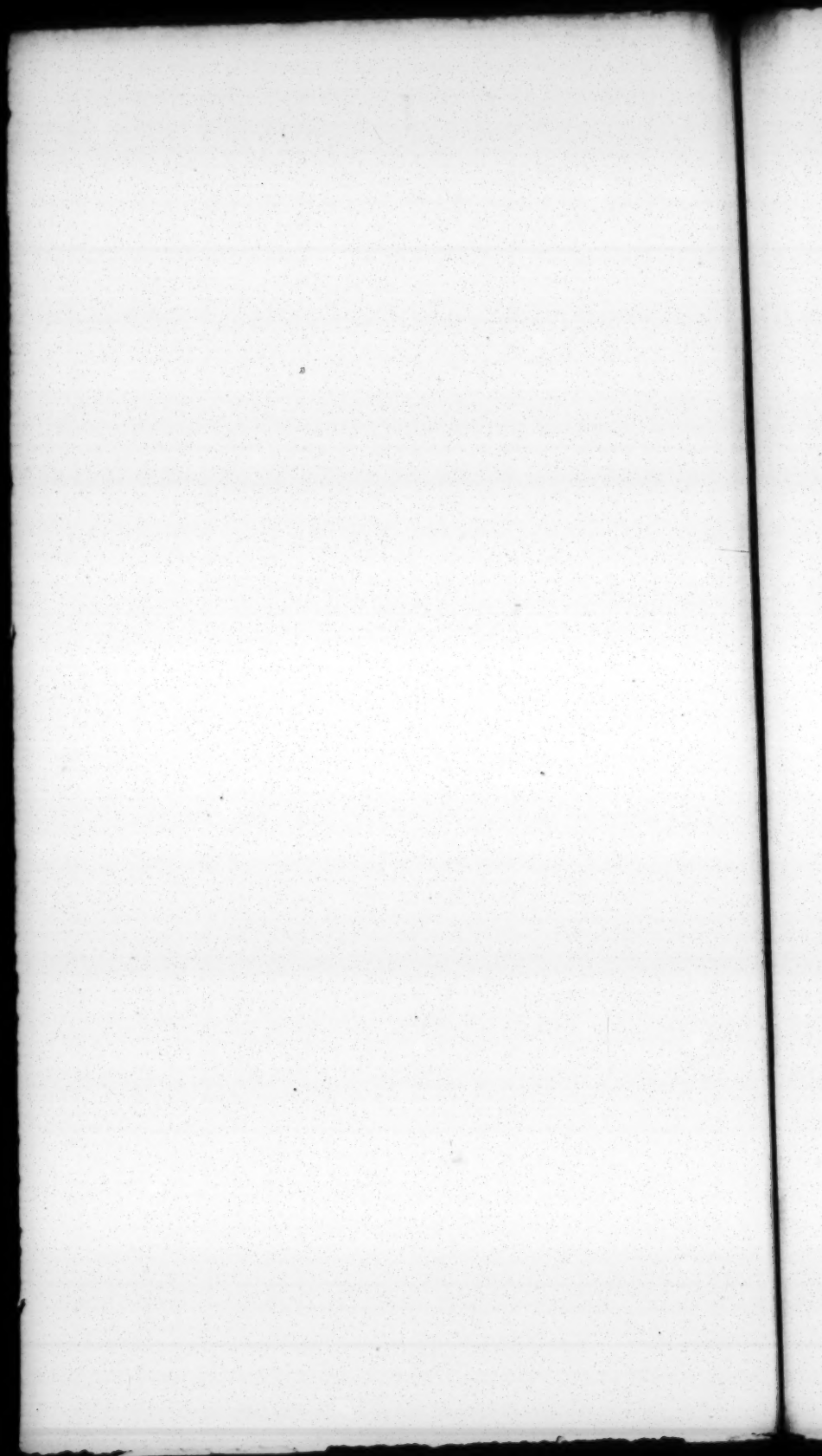
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By CHARLES THOMPSON, Esq;

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TO THE
SOCIETY
FOR THE
Encouragement of ARTS,
&c.

GENTLEMEN,

THIS attempt seems
properly addressed
to you, as encouragers
of any design to improve
even

even the leffer conveniencies, or the amusements of life. No *invention* is here pretended to ; nor other merit, than that of desiring to establish common sense in the room of unexamined maxims which generally mislead.

Though theory without practice is ineffectual, yet an art not founded on rule
is

is confined to the genius of a single artist, and cannot ascend to perfection by steps raised from the concurrent discoveries of many. Hence it is, that great arts are lost, and that little ones do not attain their perfection.

If the following pages shall meet with any degree of your approbation, I shall

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shall think my pains have
been usefully employed.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient,

And very humble Servant,

C. Thompson.

P R E F A C E.

*W*HEN I first meditated
the design of composing
this Essay, I foresaw two objec-
tions that would be made to a
work of this kind: one set of
men would properly object to the
truth of the doctrine; another,
and far the greatest part, to the
notoriety of the truth. These
would

would say, how ridiculous to teach what every body knows! What an insult upon the understanding of the public! What vanity of an author! and the like.

But if the rules here laid down will stand examination, their obviousness will but recommend them the more to the Ingenious and Candid. What is most useful, is generally simple and obvious, not only with regard to observations, but even discoveries themselves: however, I lay no claim to invention: I only offer
a col-

a collection of rules gathered from observation, which I hope will not be the less valuable, because they are plain. No genius is universal: the greatest wants instruction in most of the arts. The ablest Mathematician may be a bad rider, and possibly too, because he never heard or thought of the principles contained in this book. A hint informs a wise man, who without that hint would have remained in ignorance. If the wise then profit from instruction, how necessary is it to the multitude? Common as these precepts may seem,

let

let any man observe, how far they are from being practised, and how little Riders and Horses understand each other, and he will say, “ This Treatise needs no “ apology: very few Horsemen “ have heard of these maxims.”

RULES

R U L E S
F O R
Bad Horfemen,
O R
T H O S E
W H O D E P E N D U P O N
Practice without Principles.

T H E R E is in this
country an almost u-
niversal fondness for
horfes, and the exercife of rid-
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ing; yet but few, in comparison, are tolerable horsemen. The complaints, we hear, of horses being ungovernable, or performing ill, generally arise from the unskilfulness of their riders. The case is, we want a *just taste* in riding. No man learns it as an *art*. If a young fellow can ride a fox-chase, or a horse-race, he immediately considers himself, and is considered by others, as a good horseman. If he has a horse which he cannot manage, he will tell you, he designs to tame him by hunting: that is, if he can but get him to go forward, he will
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tire him. But what end does this answer? by a week's rest the horse becomes as ungovernable as ever; and surely, if a man cannot manage his horse in full spirits, he cannot well be said to manage him at all.

Riding in the manage, or at the riding school, is indeed considered as an *art*; and there we have professed *masters* to teach it. But it is looked on as of use to military people only; or to those, in whom a showy appearance is made proper and becoming, by their rank in

life. It is supposed also, that all managed horses are taught motions for parade only; and that their paces are spoiled for the road and hunting. Hence riding in the manage is called *riding the great horse*; and the common opinion is, that nothing of this art can be applied to general use. Almost every one thinks practice alone will teach to ride: yet if artificial measures of motion, and the imitation of a good carriage, will mend even our manner of *walking*, which nature has taught, and constant practice improved; why should *riding*, which certainly

tainly is still more an *art*, be supposed to be easily, and sufficiently attained, without *any* assistance? Does not daily experience proclaim the contrary? Do we not see many men, who make a good figure while they stand on their legs, appear on horseback, helpless and awkward? The rowing a wherry seems to be what every one might acquire without difficulty; yet they who are instructed by rule, row better than those who have had no instruction.

Notwithstanding this general opinion of the manage, there are

some who think it teaches a horse nothing which will spoil his paces, and that he is greatly benefited by it, as he is there put under such a discipline, as accustoms him to have *no will of his own*, by which means the management of him is made easy to an indifferent rider.

Were horses usually broken in thus far only in the manage, gentlemen might without great difficulty be taught all that is necessary to ride with safety, ease, and pleasure, and to make their horses perform chearfully.

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To this end, there should be masters to teach the art of riding on the *hunting* or *common saddle* ; or the unexperienced horseman should practise a while at the riding-house, with a view to get a few general principles, which he may afterwards apply to another manner of riding. Till this is done, such instruction may be given to bad horsemen, by rule, as may enable them to ride more safely and better than they do at present ; not knowing that they have any thing to learn. This, in some degree, is attempted here. Books in which the

art of riding has been fully and compleatly taught, have not been calculated for so *inferior* a part of a horseman's education. What is said here, is not therefore designed for those who ride *well*, but for those only, who are liable to difficulties and accidents, for want of *common* cautions; and who know not, that by leaving a horse at some liberty, and avoiding to give him pain by a bad management of the bridle, he will go better and more quietly, than under a bad horseman, who lays all the weight of his arms on his horse's mouth, and
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by fitting awkwardly, not only becomes an uneasy burden to himself, and his horse, but rides in continual danger of a fall.

In the first place, every horse should be accustomed to stand still, when he is mounted. One would imagine this might be readily granted; yet we see how much the contrary is practised. When a gentleman mounts at a livery-stable, the groom takes the horse by the bit, which he bends tight round his under jaw: the horse striving to go on, is forced back; advancing again, he frets,

as

as he is again stopped short, and hurt by the manner of holding him. The rider, in the mean time, mounting without the bridle, or at least holding it but slightly, is helped to it by the groom, who being thoroughly employed with the horse's fluttering, has at the same time both bridle and stirrup to give. Would not this confusion be prevented, if every horse was taught to stand still when he is mounted? Forbid your groom therefore, when he rides your horse to water, to throw himself over him from a horse-block, and kick him

him

him with his leg, even before he is fairly upon him. This wrong manner of mounting, is what chiefly teaches your horse the vicious habit, against which we are here warning. On the other hand, a constant practice of mounting in the proper manner, is all that is necessary to prevent a horse's going on, till the rider is quite adjusted in the saddle.

The next thing necessary therefore is, that the rider should mount properly. The common method is to stand near the croup, or hinder part of the horse, with
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the bridle held very long in the right hand. By this manner of holding the bridle, before you mount, you are liable to be kicked; and when you are mounted, your horse may go on some time, or play what gambols he pleases, before the rein is short enough in your hand, to prevent him. It is common likewise, for an awkward rider, as soon as his foot is in the stirrup, to throw himself with all his force, to gain his seat; which he cannot do, till he hath first overbalanced himself on one side or the other: he will then wriggle
into

into it by degrees. The way to mount with ease and safety, is, to stand rather before than behind the stirrup. In this posture take the bridle short, and the mane together in your left hand, helping yourself to the stirrup with your right, so that your toe may not touch the horse in mounting. When your left foot is in the stirrup, move on your right, till you face the side of the horse, looking across over the saddle. Then with your right hand, grasp the hinder part of the saddle, and with that and your left, which holds the mane
and

and bridle, lift yourself upright on your left foot. Remain thus a mere instant on your stirrup, only so as to divide the action in two motions. While you are in this posture, you have a sure hold with both hands, and are at liberty, either to get safely down, or to throw your leg over, and gain your seat. By this deliberate motion likewise you avoid, what every good horseman would endeavour to avoid, putting your horse into a flutter.

When you dismount, hold the
bridle and mane together in your
left

left hand, as when you mounted: put your right hand on the pommel of the saddle, to raise yourself; throw your leg back over the horse, grasp the hinder part of the saddle with your right hand, remain a moment on your stirrup, and in every respect, dismount as you mounted; only what was your first motion when you mounted, becomes the last in dismounting. Remember, not to bend your right knee in dismounting, lest your spur should rub against the horse.

It may be next recommended to hold your bridle at a convenient

nient length. Sit square, and let not the purchase of the bridle pull forward your shoulder; but keep your body *even*, as it would be if each hand held a rein. Hold your reins with the whole grasp of your hand, dividing them with your little finger. Let your hand be perpendicular; your thumb will then be uppermost, and placed on the bridle. Bend your wrist a little outward, and when you pull the bridle, raise your hand toward your breast, and the lower part of the palm rather more than the upper. Let
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the bridle be at such a length in your hand, as if the horse should stumble you may be able to raise his head, and support it by the strength of your arms, and the weight of your body thrown backward. If you hold the rein too long, you are subject to fall backward, as your horse rises.

If, knowing your horse perfectly well, you think a tight rein unnecessary, advance your arm a little (but not your shoulder) towards the horse's head, and keep your usual length of rein. By this means, you have a check

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upon

upon your horse, while you indulge him.

If you ride with a curb, make it a rule, to hook on the chain yourself: the most quiet horse may bring his rider into danger, should the curb hurt him. If in fixing the curb, you turn the chain to the right, the links will unfold themselves, and then oppose a farther turning. Put on the chain loose enough to hang down on the horse's under lip, so that it may not rise and press his jaw, till the reins of the bridle are moderately pulled.

If

If your horse has been used to stand still when he is mounted, there will be no occasion for a groom to hold him: but if he does, suffer him not to touch the reins, but that part of the bridle which comes down the cheek of the horse. He cannot then interfere with the management of the reins, which belongs to the rider only; and holding a horse by the curb (which is ever painful to him) is evidently improper, when he is to stand still.

Another thing to be remembered is, not to ride with your

arms and elbows as high as your shoulders; nor let them shake up and down with the motion of the horse. The posture is unbecoming, and the weight of the arms (and of the body too if the rider does not sit still) acts in continual jerks on the jaw of the horse, which must give him pain and make him unquiet, if he has a tender mouth, or any spirit.

Bad riders wonder why horses are gentle as soon as they are mounted by skilful ones, though their skill *seems* unemployed: the reason is, the horse goes at his ease,

case, yet finds all his motions watched; which he has sagacity enough to discover. Such a rider hides his whip, if he finds his horse is afraid of it, and keeps his legs from his sides, if he finds he dreads the spur.

Avoid the ungraceful custom of letting your legs shake against the sides of the horse; and as you are not to keep your arms and elbows high, and in motion; so you are not to rivet them to your sides, but let them fall easy. One may, at a distance, distinguish a genteel horseman, from an awk-

ward one; the firsts sits still, and appears of a piece with his horse; the latter seems flying off at all points.

It is often said with emphasis, that such a one has no *seat* on horseback; and it means, not only that he does not ride well, but that he does not sit on the right part of the horse. To have a *good seat*, is to sit on that part of the horse, which, as he springs, is the centre of motion; and from which of course, any weight would be with most difficulty shaken. As in the rising and
falling

falling of a board placed in æquilibrium, the centre will always be most at rest; the true seat will be found in that part of your saddle, into which your body would naturally slide, if you rode without stirrups; and is only to be preserved by a proper poise of the body, though the generality of riders imagine it is to be done by the grasp of the thighs and knees. The rider should consider himself as united to his horse in this point, and when shaken from it, endeavour to restore the balance.

Perhaps the mention of the two extremes of a bad seat may

help to describe the true one. The one is, when the rider sits very far back on the saddle, so that his weight presses the loins of the horse; the other, when his body hangs forward over the pommel of the saddle. The first, may be seen practised by grooms, when they ride with their stirrups affectedly short; the latter, by fearful horsemen on the least flutter of the horse. Every *good* rider has, even on the hunting saddle, as *determined* a place for his thighs, as can be determined for him by the bars of a demi-peak.

peak. Indeed there is no difference between the seat of either: only, as in the first you ride with shorter stirrups, your body will be consequently more behind your knees.

To have a good seat yourself, your saddle must fit well. To fix a precise rule might be difficult: it may be a *direction*, to have your saddle press as nearly as possible on that part, which we have described as the point of union between the man and horse, however, so as not to obstruct the motion of the horse's shoulders.

Place

Place yourself in the middle or lowest part of it: sit erect; but with as little constraint, as in your ordinary sitting. The ease of action marks the gentleman: you may repose yourself, but not lounge. The set and studied erectness acquired in the riding-house, by those whose deportment is not easy, appears ungenteel, and unnatural.

If your horse stops short, or endeavours by rising and kicking to unseat you, bend not your body forward, as many do in those circumstances: that motion throws
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the breech backward, and you off your fork or twist, and out of your seat; whereas, the advancing the lower part of your body, and bending back the upper part and shoulders, is the method both to keep your seat, and to recover it when lost. The bending your body back, and that in a great degree, is the greatest security in *flying* leaps; it is a security too, when your horse leaps *standing*. The horse's rising does not try the rider's seat; the lash of his hind legs is what ought chiefly to be guarded against, and is best done by the body's being greatly in-

inclined back. Stiffen not your legs or thighs, and let your body be pliable in the loins, like the coachman's on his box. This loose manner of sitting will elude every rough motion of the horse ; whereas the fixture of the knees, so commonly laid a stress on, will in great shocks conduce to the violence of the fall.

Was the cricket player, when the ball is struck with the greatest velocity, to hold his hand firm and fixed when he receives it, the hand would be bruised, or perhaps the bones fractured by
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the resistance. To obviate this accident, he therefore gradually yields his hand to the motion of the ball for a certain distance; and thus by a due mixture of opposition and obedience, catches it without sustaining the least injury. The case is exactly the same in riding: the skilful horseman will recover his poise, by giving some way to the motion, and the ignorant horseman will be flung out of his seat, by endeavouring to be fixed.

Stretch not out your legs before
you: this will push you against
the

the back of the saddle; neither gather up your knees, like a man riding on a pack, this throws your thighs upwards: each practice unseats you. Keep your legs straight down, and sit not on the most fleshy part of the thighs, but turn them inwards, so as to bring in your knees and toes; and it is more safe to ride with the ball of the foot pressing on the stirrup, than with the stirrup as far back as the heel; for the pressure of the heel being in that case behind the stirrup, keeps the thighs down.

When

When you find your thighs thrown upwards, widen your knees to get them and the upper part of your fork lower down on the horse. Grasp the saddle with the hollow or inner part of your thighs, but not more than just to assist the balance of your body: this will also enable you to keep your spurs from the horse's sides, and to bring your toes in, without that affected and useless manner of bringing them in, practised by many. Sink your heels straight down, for while your heels and thighs keep down, you cannot fall: this
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(aided with the bend of the back) gives the security of a seat, to those who bear themselves up in their stirrups in a swift gallop, or in the alternate rising and falling in a full trot.

Let your seat determine the length of your stirrups, rather than the stirrups your seat. If more precision is requisite, let your stirrups (in the hunting saddle) be of such a length, as that when you stand in them, there may be the breadth of four fingers between your seat and the saddle.

It

It would greatly assist a learner, if he would practise riding in a large circle, without stirrups, keeping his face looking on the outward part of the circle so as not to have a full view of the horse's head, but just of that ear which is on the outward part of the circle; and his shoulder, which is towards the centre of the circle, very forward. By this means you learn to balance your body, and keep a true seat, independent of your stirrups: you may probably likewise escape a fall, should you

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at any time lose them, by being accidentally shaken from your seat.

As the seat in some measure depends on the saddle, it may not be amiss to observe, that because a saddle with a high pommel is thought dangerous, the other extreme prevails, and the pommel is scarce allowed to be higher than the middle of the saddle. The saddle should lie as near the back bone, as can be, without hurting the horse; for the nearer you sit to his back, the better seat you have. If it does so, it is plain the pommel must rise enough to secure the withers from pressure :

sure: therefore a horse whose withers are higher than common, requires a higher pommel. If to avoid this, you make the saddle of a more straight line, the inconvenience spoken of follows; you sit too much above the horse's back; nor can the saddle form a proper seat. There should be no ridge from the button at the side of the pommel, to the back part of the saddle. That line also should be a little concave, for your thighs to lie at ease. In short, a saddle ought to be, as nearly as possible, as if cut out of the horse.

When you want your horse to move forward, raise his head a little, and touch him gently with your whip; or else, press the calves of your legs against his sides. If he does not move fast enough, press them with more force, and so, till the spur just touches him. By this practice, he will (if he has any spirit) move upon the least pressure of the leg. Never spur him by a kick; but if it be necessary to spur him briskly, keep your heels close to his sides, and flaken their force, as he becomes obedient.

When

When your horse attempts to be vicious, take each rein separate, one in each hand, and advancing your arms forward, hold him very short. In this case, it is common for the rider to pull him hard, with his arms low; but the horse by this means having his head low too, has it more in his power to throw out his heels: whereas, if his head be raised very high, and his nose thrown out a little, which is consequent, he can neither rise before, nor behind; because he can give himself neither of those motions, without having his head

at liberty. A plank placed in æquilibrium, cannot rise at one end unless it sinks at the other.

If your horse is headstrong, pull not with one continued pull, but stop, and back him often, just shaking the reins, and making little repeated pulls till he obeys. Horses are so accustomed to bear on the bit, when they go forward, that they are discouraged if the rider will not let them do so.

If a horse is loose-necked, he will throw up his head at a
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continued pull; in which situation, the rider seeing the front of his face, can have no power over him. When your horse does thus, drop your hand and give the bridle play, and he will of course drop his head again into its proper place: while it is coming down, make a second gentle pull, and you will find his mouth. With a little practice, this is done almost instantaneously; and this method will stop, in the distance of a few yards, a horse, which will run away with those who pull at him with *all* their might. Almost

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every one must have observed, that when a horse feels himself pulled with the bridle, even when he is going gently, he often mistakes what was designed to *stop* him, as a direction to bear on the bit, and to go *faster*.

Keep your horse's head high, that he may raise his neck, and crest; play a little with the rein, and move the bit in his mouth, that he may not press on it, in one constant and continued manner. Be not afraid of raising his head too high; he will naturally be too ready to bring it down,

down, and tire your arms with its weight, on the least abatement of his mettle. When you feel him heavy, stop him, and make him go back a few paces : thus you break by degrees his propensity to press on his bridle.

You ought not to be pleased (though many are) with a round neck, and a head drawn in towards his breast : let your horse carry his head bridling in, provided he carries it high, and his neck arching *upwards* ; but if his neck bends *downwards*, his figure is bad, his fight is too near his
toes,

toes, he leans on the bridle, and you have no command over him. If he goes pressing but lightly on his bridle, he is the more sure-footed, and goes pleasanter; as your wrist only may guide him. If he hangs down his head, and makes you support the weight of that and his neck with your arms bearing on his fore-legs, (which is called *being on his shoulders*) he will strike his toes against the ground, and stumble.

If your horse is heavy upon his bit, tie him every day, for
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an hour or two, with his tail to the manger, and his head as high as you can make him lift it, by a rein on each post of the stall, tied to each ring of the snaffle bit.

Horse-breakers and grooms, have a great propensity to bring a horse's head *down*, and seem to have no feat without a strong hold by the bridle. They know indeed, that the head should yield to the reins, and the neck form an arch, but do not take the proper pains [to make it arch *upward*. A temporary effect of
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attempting to raise a horse's head, may perhaps be making him push out his nose. They will here tell you, that his head is too high already; whereas it is not the distance from his *nose*, but from the *top* of his head, to the ground, which determines the head to be high or low. Besides, although the fault is said to be in the manner of carrying the head, it should rather be said to be in that of the neck; for if the neck was raised, the head would be more in the position of one set on a well formed neck.

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The design therefore of lifting up the head, is to raise the neck, and *thereby* bring in the head; for even while the bridle makes the same line from the rider's hand to the bit, the horse's nose may be either drawn in, or thrust out, according as his neck is raised or depressed. Instead of what has been here recommended, we usually see colts broke with their heads caved in, very low, their necks stiff, and not in the least suppled. When the breaking-tackle is left off, and they are mounted for the road, having more food and rest,

rest, they frequently plunge, and a second breaking becomes necessary. Then, as few gentlemen can manage their own horses, they are put into the hands of grooms, from whom they learn a variety of bad habits.

If on the other hand, your horse carries his head (or rather his nose) too high, he generally makes some amends by moving his shoulders lightly, and going safely. Attend to the cause of this fault. Some horses have their necks set so low on their shoulders, that they bend
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first down, then upwards, like a stag's. Some have the upper line of their necks, from their ears to their withers, too short. A head of this sort cannot possibly bend inwards, and form an arch, because the vertebræ (or neck bones) are too short to admit of flexure; for in long and short necked horses the number of the vertebræ is the same. In some, the jaw is so thick, that it meets the neck, and the head by this means has not room to bend. On the other hand, some have the under line from the jaw to the breast,
so

so short, that the neck cannot rise.

In all these cases you may gain a *little* by a nice hand with an easy bit; but no curb, martingale, or other forcible method, will *teach* a horse to carry his head or neck, in a posture which nature has made uneasy to him. By trying to pull in his nose, farther than he can bear, you will add a bad habit to nature. You could not indeed *contrive* a more effectual method, to make him continually

toss

tofs his nose up, and throw his foam over you.

The rule already given to ride a loose-necked horse, will be a proper one for all light-mouthed horses : one caution being added, which is, always to search whether his saddle, or girths may not in some way pinch him, and whether the bit may not hurt his lip by being too high in his mouth : because whenever he frets from either of these causes, his head will not be steady.

It is a common custom, to be always pulling at the bridle, as if

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to set off to advantage either the spirit of the horse, or the skill of the rider. Our horses therefore are taught to hold their heads low, and pull so, as to bear up the rider from the saddle, standing in his stirrups, even in the gentlest gallop: how very improper this is, we are experimentally convinced, when we happen to meet with a horse which gallops otherwise. We immediately say, he canters excellently, and find the ease and pleasure of his motion. When horses are designed for the race,
and

and swiftness is the only thing considered, the method may be a good one.

It is not to be wondered, that *Dealers* are always pulling at their horses; that they have the spur constantly in their sides, and are at the same time continually checking the rein: by this means they make them bound, and champ the bit, while their rage has the appearance of spirit. These people ride with their arms spread, and very low on the shoulders of their horses: this method makes them stretch their

necks, and gives a better appearance to their fore-hands ; it conceals also a thick jaw, which if the head was up, would prevent its yielding to the bit ; it hides likewise the ewe-neck, which would otherwise shew itself. Indeed, if you have a horse unsteady to the bit, formed with a natural heavy head, or one which carries his nose obstinately in the air, you must find his mouth where you can, and make the best of him.

Many horses are taught to start, by whipping them for starting.

How

How is it possible they can know it is designed as a punishment? In the riding-house, you teach your horse to rise up before; and to spring and lash out his hinder legs, by whipping him when tied between two pillars, with his head a little at liberty. If he understood this to be a punishment for doing so, he would not by that method learn to do it. He seems to be in the same manner *taught* to spring and fly when he is frightened. Most horses would go quietly past an object they were beginning to fly from, if their riders, instead of gather-

ing up their bridles, and shewing themselves so ready, should throw the reins loose upon their necks.

When a horse starts at any thing on one side, most riders turn him out of the road, to make him go up to what he starts at: if he does not get the better of his fear, or readily comply, he generally goes past the object, making with his hinder parts, or croup, a great circle out of the road; whereas, he should learn to keep straight on, without minding objects on either side.

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If he starts at any thing on the left, hold his head high, and keep it straight in the road, pulling it *from* looking at the thing he starts at, and keeping your right leg hard pressed against his side, towards his flank : he will then go straight along the road. By this method, and by turning his head a little more, he may be forced with his croup close up to what frightened him ; for as his head is pulled one way, his croup necessarily turns the other. Always avoid a quarrel with your horse, if you can ; if he is apt to start, you will find

occasions enough to exercise his obedience, when what he starts at lies directly in his way, and you *must* make him pass: if he is not subject to start, you should not contend with him about a trifle.

Let me just observe, that this rule in going past an object may perhaps be a little irregular in a managed horse; which will always obey the leg: but even such a horse, if he is really afraid, and not restive, it may not be amiss to make look another way; unless the object be something

thing you would particularly accustom him to the sight of.

The case will also be different, with a horse whose fear is owing to his being not used to objects; but such a one is not to be rode by any horseman to whom these rules are directed: the starting here meant arises merely from the horse's being pamper'd, and springing through liveliness.

The notion of the necessity of making a horse go immediately up to every thing he is afraid of, and not suffering him to become

come master of his rider, seems to be in general carried too far. It is an approved and good method to conquer a horse's fear of the sound of a drum, by beating one near to him at the time of feeding him: this not only familiarises the noise to him, but makes it pleasant, as a fore-runner of his meat; whereas if he was whipped up to it, he might perhaps start at it, as long as he lived. Might not this be applied to his starting at other things, and shew that it would be better to suffer him (provided he does not turn back) to go

a little from, and avoid an object he has a dislike to, and to accustom him to it by degrees, convincing him as it were that it will not hurt him; than to punish him, quarrel with him, and perhaps submit to his will at last, while you insist on his overcoming his fear in an instant? If he sees a like object again, it is probable he will recollect his dread, and arm himself to be disobedient.

We are apt to suppose, that a horse fears nothing so much as his rider; but may he not,
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in many circumstances, be afraid of instant destruction? of being crushed? of being drowned? of falling down a precipice? is it a wonder that a horse should be afraid of a loaded waggon? may not the hanging load seem to threaten the falling on him? there cannot be a rule more general, than, in such a case, to shew him there is room for him to pass. This is done by turning his head a very little from the carriage, and pressing your leg, which is farthest from it, against his side.

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A horse is not to stop without a sign from his rider—Is it not then probable, that when he is driven up to a carriage he starts at, he conceives himself obliged either to attack or run against it? Can he understand the rider's spurring him with his face directed to it, as a sign for him to pass it? That a horse is easily alarmed for his face and eyes; (he will even catch back his head from a hand going to caress him) that he will not go with any force, face to face, even to another horse (if in his power to stop); and that he sees perfectly
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sideways, may be useful hints for the treatment of horses, with regard to starting.

Though you ought not to whip a horse for starting, there can be no good effect from clapping his neck with your hand, to encourage him. If one took any notice of his starting, it should be rather with some tone of voice which he usually understood as an expression of dislike to what he is doing ; for there is *opposition* mixed with his starting, and a horse will ever repeat what he finds has foiled his rider.

Not-

Notwithstanding the direction above given, of not pressing a horse up to a carriage he starts at, yet if one which you apprehend will frighten him, meets you at a narrow part of the road; when you have once let him know he is to pass it, be sure you remain determined, and press him on. Do this more especially, when part of the carriage has already past you; for if, when he is frightened, he is accustomed to go back, and turn round, he will certainly do it, if he finds, by your hand slackening, and legs not pressing, that
you

you are irresolute ; and this at the most dangerous point of time, when the wheels of the carriage take him as he turns. Remember not to touch the curb rein at this time, it will certainly check him. It is not known to every one, that the person who would lead a horse by the bridle, should not turn his face to him, when he refuses to follow him : if besides this he raises his arms, shews his whip, or pulls the bridle with jerks, he frightens the horse instead of persuading him to follow ; which a little patience may bring about.

Ride

Ride with a snaffle, and use your curb, if you have one, only occasionally. Chuse your snaffle full and thick in the mouth, especially at the ends, to which the reins are fastened. Most of them are made too small and long; they cut the horse's mouth, and bend back over the bars of his jaw, working like pincers.

The management of the curb is too nice a matter to enter on here, farther, than to prescribe great caution in the use of it: a turn of the wrist, rather than the weight of your

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arm.

arm, should be applied to it. The elasticity of a rod, when it hath hooked a fish, may give you some idea of the proper play of a horse's head on his bridle; his spirit and his pliability are both marked by it.

A horse should never be put to do any thing in a curb, which he is not ready at: you may force him, or pull his head any way, with a snaffle; but a curb acts only in a straight line. It is true, that a horse will be turned out of one track into another by a curb, but it is because

cause he knows it as a *signal*. When he is put to draw a chair, and does not understand the necessity he is then under of taking a larger sweep, when he turns, you frequently see him *restive*, as it is then called; but put him on a snaffle, or buckle the rein to that part of the bit, which does not curb him; and the horse submits to be pulled about, till he understands what is desired of him. These directions suppose your horse to have spirit, and a good mouth: if he has not, you must take him as he is, and ride him with such

a bit, as you find most easy to yourself.

When you ride a journey, be not so attentive to your horse's nice carriage of himself, as to your encouragement of him, and keeping him in good humour. Raise his head; but if he flags, you may indulge him with bearing a little more upon the bit, than you would suffer in an airing. If a horse is lame, tender-footed, or tired, he naturally hangs upon his bridle. On a journey therefore, his mouth will depend greatly on his strength, and the
good-

goodness of his feet. Be then very careful about his feet, and let not a farrier spoil them. You will be enabled to keep them from danger, by a few directions, which shall not be very digressive.

When your horse is shod, suffer not his feet to be hollowed, but order them to be pared quite flat, and most at the toe. There is generally a finishing stroke, for the sake of neatness, given by a farrier, at the end of the horn of the hoof, above the shoe; this is the *most use-*

ful part of the hoof, and whatever is taken from it, it is like paring the bottom of a post, which of consequence weakens it in the most essential way. Let not the heel nor frog be pared, more than to take off what is ragged or broken. (It is still more safe to do that yourself at your leisure with a knife, than to trust a farrier to pare it in the least.)

If this method was practised, horses would be less liable to corns, as the hoof in that case would escape the pressure it is

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exposed to in the usual manner of shoeing, and pressure is a frequent cause of corns. This would secure them too against wounds from pointed nails, which cannot pierce the flesh of the foot, through a frog in its natural state. Such an one is of a still farther use; it keeps the two divisions of the heel broad and asunder. Yet farriers do just the contrary, and pare the frog very thin, in order to *open* the heel, as they term it; by which it is plain they see the necessity of keeping the heel broad and open, though

they prevent the very effect they aim at. They also make another mistake in driving nails very backward toward the heel, where the horn is soft and sensible; and none at the toe, where every horse has a substance of horn sufficient to bear them.—Few, except stoned horses, have high heels; when they have, the whole foot must be pared flat, but the frog by no means hollowed out. If a horse has a low heel, that is, such an one as lets the fleshy part of the heel come too near the ground, let him be pared only
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at the toe. A horse with short pasterns requires a shorter shoe, because a long shoe brings his heels more back than the un-
pliability of his pasterns will admit, without some degree of pain. In general, a short shoe may possibly sometimes expose a horse to little accidental lamenesses, but a long shoe with the nails far back near his heels, will in the end contract and ruin them. It is plain from experience, that all low-heeled horses go best when they have been long shod; that is, when the foot is grown longer, and the shoe in consequence

quence is become proportionably shorter, and fits more forward on the foot.

Many horses turn out their toes, and thereby cut themselves with the inside of the heel. The farrier's forming the shoe, by cutting off the hinder-part in a straight line, parallel with the toe, makes a sharp corner where the shoe comes in contact with the ground: and also at the top of the thickness of the shoe, just clear of the heel. These two
points

points*, (sometimes the one, sometimes the other) often hurt the horse more sharply, than when he cuts with any other part of the foot; as the rider sensibly feels from the shrinking of the horse. (The same thing happens to many men from the points of their shoe-heels: these being in the forepart of the heel does not make the comparison an improper one.) The horses here spoken of, give themselves the blow in lifting up the moving foot; the shoe cutting *across* its edge, and often with the upper sharp point already mentioned. The remedy is “filing off

• See the figure, next Page.

the points, and a little blunting the sharp edge from the higher to the lower point on the inside of the shoe: not however to extremity, and especially not at the bottom: because if the shoe be too much rounded at the heel, it will want a support, and more so when on a pavement.

The two figures represent the hind-parts of the fore shoes, as seen by an eye behind the horse.



* A represents the upper point. B the same at bottom. The space between A and B the sharp edge which is to be a little blunted.

Many

Many horses strike the hinder feet against the fore shoes, when they are pressed in trotting; making a loud sound by one iron striking against another. A remark here, tho it should seem minute, may remedy what is very disagreeable. The farrier knows that he should here shorten the toe of the hind-hoof, and shoe, as much as the hoof will bear : but his custom is to shorten the hoof *always* just at the middle point, or tip of the toe; when perhaps the horse, by turning out his hinder-foot, strikes with the *inside* of the shoe. Horses do this more frequently than with

with the outside: but wherever the hind-shoe strikes against the fore shoe, *that* is the place where it should be shortened.

VERY few, although practised in riding, know they have any power over a horse but by the bridle; or any use for the spur, except to make him go forward. A little experience will teach them a farther use. If the left spur touches him (and he is at the same time prevented from going forward) he has a sign, which he will soon understand to move sideways to
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the right. In the same manner to the left, if the right spur is closed to him: he afterwards, through fear of the spur, obeys a touch of the leg. In the same manner as a horse moves his croup from one side of the stall to the other, when any one strikes him with his hand. In short, his croup is guided by the leg, as his head is by the bridle. He will never disobey the leg, unless he becomes restive. By this means you will have a far greater power over him; he will move sideways, if you close one leg to him, and straight forward,

ward, if both : even when he stands still, your legs held near him will keep him on the watch, and with the slightest, unseen motion of the bridle upwards, he will raise his head, and shew his forehead to advantage.

On this use of the legs of the rider, and guidance of the croup of the horse, are founded all the *Airs* (as the riding-masters express themselves) which are taught in the manage ; the passage, or side motion of troopers to close or open their files, and indeed all their evolutions. But
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the convenience of some degree of this discipline for common use, is the reason of mentioning it here. It is useful if a horse is subject to stumble or start. If to the first, by pressing your legs to his flank, and keeping up his head, he is made to go light on his fore-legs, which is aiding and supporting him, and the same if he does actually stumble, by helping him at the very instant to exert himself, while as yet any part of him remains not irrecoverably impressed with the precipitate motion. Hence this use of the hand and

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legs

legs of the rider is called giving *aids* to a horse, for as to holding up the weight of a heavy unactive horse, by meer pulling, it is as impossible as to recover him when falling down a precipice.

A horse is supported and helped by the hands and legs of his rider, in every action they require of him; hence he is said to perform his *airs* by the *aids* from his rider.

The same manner is useful if a horse starts. For when he
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is beginning to fly to one side, your leg on the side he is flying to, stops his spring immediately. He goes past what he started at, keeping straight on, or as you chuse to direct him, and he will not fly back from any thing, if you press him with both legs. You keep his haunches under him, going down a hill; help him on the side of a bank; more easily avoid the wheel of a carriage, and approach more gracefully and nearer to the side of a coach, or horseman. When a pampered horse curvets irregularly, and twists his

body to and fro, turn his head either to the right or left, or both alternately, (but without letting him move out of the track) and press your leg to the opposite side: your horse cannot then spring on his hind legs, to one side, because your leg prevents him; nor to the other, because his head looks that way, and a horse does not start and spring to the side on which he looks. Here it may not be amiss to observe the impropriety of the habit which many riders have, of letting their legs shake against the sides of the horse; if a horse is taught,

taught, they are then continually pressing him to violent action ; and if he is not, they render him insensible and incapable of being taught. The fretting of a hot horse will hence be excessive, as it can no otherwise be moderated, than by the utmost stillness of the seat, hands and legs of the rider.

These rules and observations may perhaps convey some idea, though but an imperfect one, to bad riders, of that *slight*, which makes horses obedient, when they would resist *force* ; and may serve
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to shew them, that something more than what the horse learns from the *Breaker*, is necessary to make him tractable.

Colts at first are taught to *bear* a bit and by degrees to *pull* at it. If they did not press it, they could not be guided by it. By degrees they find their necks stronger than the arms of a man ; and that they are capable of making great opposition, and often of foiling their riders. Then is the time to make them supple and pliant in every part. The part which of all others requires most this pliancy,
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is the neck. Hence the metaphor of *stiffnecked* for *disobedient*. A horse cannot move his head, but with the muscles of his neck: this may be called his helm; it guides his course, changes and directs his motion.

To shew the use of this pliancy in *every* part and limb of the horse, would be beyond the design of these few lessons, directed only to the *unexperienced* horseman. *His* idea of suppleness need only be, that of an ability and readiness in a horse to move every limb, on a sign given him by the
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the hand or legs of his rider ;
 as also, to bend his body, and
 move in a short compass, quick
 and collected within himself, so
 as instantly to be able to perform
 any other motion.

If the few rules laid down
 here, seem insufficient to the end
 proposed ; at least let me hope
 they will convince the young
 horseman that *some* rules are
 necessary : and thus convinced,
 let him apply to abler masters
 in the art for more sufficient
 instruction.

F I N I S.

